

CASE STUDY: Bike Your Watershed

Location:	Deschutes watershed, Thurston County, WA
Event:	Bike Your Watershed
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Background

In 2008, a group of environmental and bicycle enthusiasts at the Washington State Department of Ecology formed a group to organize the second annual *Bike Your Watershed* event to promote the connection between watershed awareness and bicycling. *Bike Your Watershed* is a recreational ride through the Deschutes watershed located in Thurston County, Washington. The Deschutes watershed covers 270 square miles, and includes the cities of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater and Rainier. The event also includes a celebration with music at the end of the ride.

The event is open to all people, and is not a race. It is an event designed to promote watershed education through broad-based community involvement and outreach. The group believes that while there are numerous bicycling events and countless watershed education programs, this event brings these two concepts together.

Approximately 200 people attended the event. Small snacks were served, such as cookies, orange slices, and granola bars, along with water from a cooler. Several participants brought their own drink in cans or disposable plastic bottles.

Recycling Activities

Three volunteers made sure that the following was set up for separating waste as it was tossed:

1. One container for traditional recyclable materials, such as cans and bottles (glass or plastic), mixed paper and card board;
2. Another container for organic waste such as food scraps and food-soiled paper;
3. A third container for any other left-over garbage.

The volunteers also stayed at those containers to help people decide what to throw into which container. Many did not know that napkins and paper cups could be composted, for example. All three containers were stationed right next to the snack booth and were well-marked. It should also be noted that all food items provided came with minimal packaging and were finger-foods, thus reducing potential for waste from the get-go.

Results

Minimal waste was produced: the volume of garbage was not even the size of a football. It consisted almost exclusively of granola bar wrappers and was very light-weight. About 8 gallons worth of organic waste was combined with other city organic waste and taken to the local commercial composter; and, about 40 gallons worth of cans and bottles were also recycled. An event of this size could have easily generated ten times the amount of garbage.

With proper planning and collection containers and signage garbage can almost be reduced to zero.